

CITY OF MIAMI BEACH
Office of the City Manager
Letter to Commission No. 216-2005

To: Mayor David Dermer and
Members of the City Commission

Date: August 16, 2005

From: Jorge M. Gonzalez
City Manager



Subject: Summer Campers "Walking Tall"

Miami Beach summer campers learned the ancient art of walking on stilts in a program jointly presented by the City's Parks & Recreation Department and the Miami Performing Arts Center, with the support of the Miami Beach Convention Center. Classes were taught July 26 – August 4, 2005 in a carpeted room of the Convention Center.

The innovative program received exceptional coverage by the Miami Herald. The paper devoted nearly two-thirds of its "Metro & State" cover page to a story with extensive photography. A copy of the coverage of the program is attached.

Stilt-training teaches children how to balance, move, and perform on stilts while encouraging creativity, promoting physical fitness, and helping the children to build confidence and self-esteem. Classes were taught by stilts expert, Alessandra Ogren of Wise Fool, a physical theater company in New Mexico.

The stilt walking experience capped out an extremely successful 2005 Parks & Recreation Department summer camp that saw nearly 2,500 K-12th graders taking regular day camps classes and specialty camps that included dance, tennis, art, golf, teen fitness, surfing, ice hockey, sports camps and marine biology.

Please mark your calendar for these upcoming Parks & Recreation Department programs:

Movie in the Pool, Saturday, August 20, 2005, Scott Rakow Youth Center Pool

Free Fundays, Sunday, October 2, 2005, Flamingo Pool

You are cordially invited to visit our facilities and experience firsthand the recreational programs that offer something for every member of the family.

Should you have additional questions, please contact Kevin Smith at (305) 673-7730.



JMG/RCM/KS/JM/jm
Attachment

c: Robert C. Midaugh, Assistant City Manager
Kevin Smith, Parks & Recreation Director
Julio Magrisso, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

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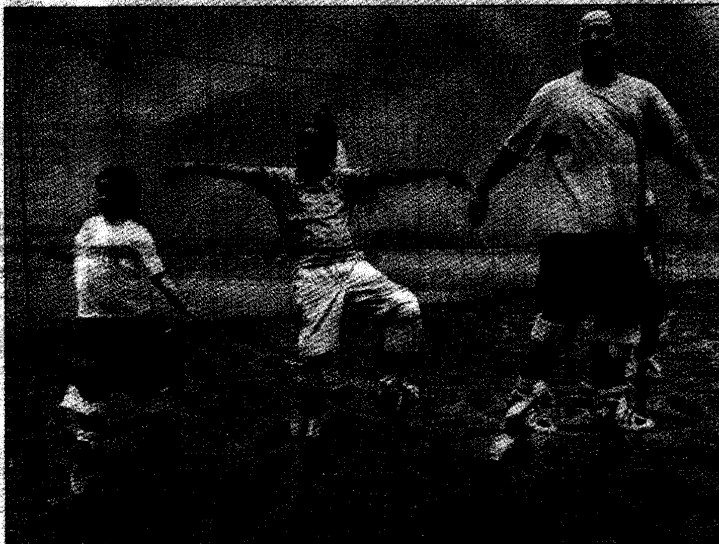
FRIDAY, AUGUST 8, 2009 | EDITOR: MANNY GARCIA, mgarcia@herald.com 305-376-5838 or 954-538-7150 | THE HERALD

ON STILTS: At right, professional stilt walker Alessandra Ogren on Thursday demonstrates for kids attending summer camp how it's done. The class, sponsored by Miami Beach Parks & Recreation and the Miami Performing Arts Center, was held at the Miami Beach Convention Center. Below middle, Isauri Delgado, 8, Javier Hernandez, 10, and rec leader Dustin Cairns start to get the hang of it. Bottom, from left, Yansy Suazo, 11, Javier, Victoria Faur, 11, Isauri and Mauro Piovani, 11, make stilt walking look easy.



PHOTOS BY DONNA E. NATALE PLANA/HERALD STAFF

Walking TALL



MIAMI BEACH CAMPERS REACH FOR THE STARS ON STILTS

BY LAURA FIGUEROA
lfigueroa@herald.com

You put your right foot in...
You put your right foot
out...
You do the hokey pokey
then you...
THUMP!

Victoria Faur, 11, fell to the
floor, learning the hard way it's
hard to shake it all about and
maintain your balance on 2½-
foot tall wooden stilts.

"It was scary at first," said
Victoria, trying unsuccessfully
to follow the instructions of the

Hokey Pokey as the lyrics
blared from a radio inside the
Miami Beach Convention Cen-
ter.

"But I still like it, it feels like
you're flying."

*TURN TO STILTS, 2B



MIAMI BEACH

Kids reach new heights

*STILTS, FROM 1B

Along with 15 of her peers from the Fairway Park Summer Camp in Miami Beach, Victoria stumbled through stilt walking lessons provided by instructors from the Miami Performing Arts Center.

Among the lessons taught were the history of stilt walking, how to walk on the wooden contraptions that were one foot to three feet off the ground, and teamwork.

"It teaches them a lot of teamwork," said instructor Tony Seepersad. "It's great to see how the less experienced ones hold on to the more experienced ones, and they've all been supportive of each other."

But that changed when the pumping bass sounds of "The Tootsie Roll" came on. All notions of teamwork went out the window.

"They all try to one up each other," Seepersad said.

Javier Hernandez, 10, faced off in a dancing duel against Mauro Piovani, 11. Javier bobbed his head and shook his upper body performing the urban dance "The Harlem Shake."



IF YOU GO

For information on stilt-walking classes, call Kathryn Garcia at 305-372-7611.

Mauro had a more laid back approach, just bouncing up and down to the music. Both boys showed no signs of falling.

But even Javier and Mauro's smooth moves couldn't compare to a pro like fellow camper Shalewa Parrish, 11, who learned to stilt walk five days ago.

"I'm in the advance level," Shalewa stated, matter of factly.

Despite having a nickle-size patch of skin gone from her leg, a result she acknowledges came from a stilt fall, Shalewa danced in the center of the room for all to see.

The confidence with which Shalewa strutted is what instructor Lela Lombardo said is the biggest lesson gained.

"It boosts their self-esteem," Lombardo said.

"They get to conquer their fears in a safe environment."

Lombardo, Seepersad and six other instructors are themselves novices to stilt walking.

They are all locally based performing artists taught how to stilt walk by Alessandra Ogren, a professional stilt walker with Wise Fool, a performing arts group based in New Mexico.

Ogren trained the group as part of an initiative of the Miami Performing Arts Center.

When the PAC celebrates the completion of its exterior structure on Dec. 2, it plans on having 150 youngsters from throughout the county stilt walking in the Lighting the House parade.

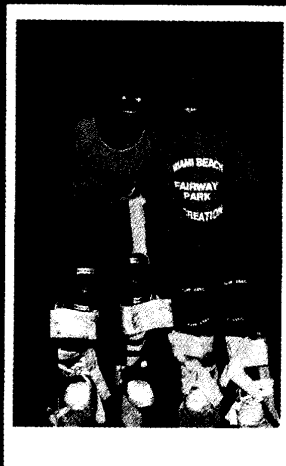
At the end of the hour-long session, Dustin Cairns, the children's camp counselor, ran into some difficulties grounding the hyper students.

Their stilts were off, but they didn't want to leave.

Cairns could sympathize.

"It's great," he said.

"They learned through this class they can accomplish everything."



stilt classes - August 3, 2005